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HOLIDAY BASH!

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SPECIAL

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RD/RC

THE BENEFACTION OF PEACE

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BEARING GIFTS WE TRAVERSE AFAR

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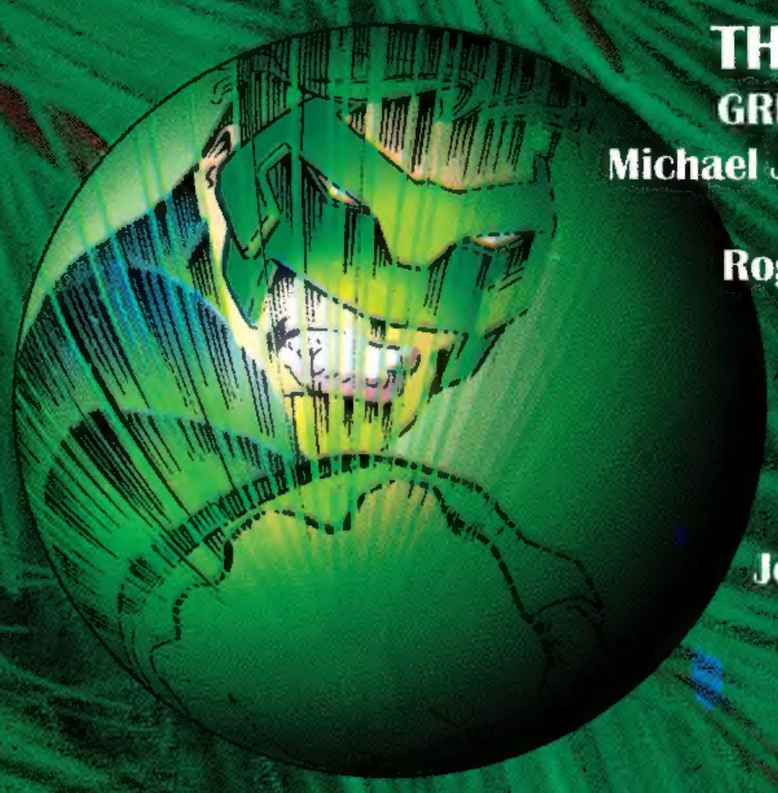

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A HIGH FATHER CHRISTMAS

ORION & HIGHFATHER

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SATAN'S LITTLE HELPER

DEMON

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JUST ANOTHER NIGHT

BATMAN

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John Costanza
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DC UNIVERSE

DCU HOLIDAY BASH!

DAILY PLANET

DUSK; DECEMBER 24TH.

SEGAL

MERRY CHRISTMAS...

...GEORGE, ISN'T IT?

Y-YES.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, GEORGE?

JEANNIE--M-MY WIFE-- SHE LEFT ME.

AN' CHRISTMAS WAS GOING TO BE TOO BIG, TOO EMPTY WITHOUT HER.

LEAVIN' WITH A *BANG* SEEMED LIKE... WELL... THE ONLY THING TO DO.

LONELINESS ISN'T THE END OF THE WORLD.

YOU CAN'T LET IT KILL YOU.

YOU DO SOMETHING *ABOUT* IT.

YOU KNOW, GEORGE, I'VE INTERVIEWED SUPERMAN... I'VE LOST TRACK OF HOW MANY TIMES NOW...

...AND WOULD YOU BELIEVE, EVEN *HE* GETS INCREDIBLY LONELY SOMETIMES?

IMAGINE THAT. *SUPERMAN* GETS LONELY.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I REMEMBER A STORY HE ONCE TOLD ME ABOUT A CHRISTMAS, EARLY IN HIS CAREER--

--THAT HE SPENT VERY LONELY INDEED...

The Benefaction of Peace

BARRY JAMESON - WRITER
GRAHAM NOLAN - PENCILLER
JOSEF RUBINSTEIN - INKER
JASON WRIGHT - COLORIST
ALBERT T. DEGUZMAN - LETTERER

SUPERMAN Created by SIEGEL & SHUSTER

A CHRISTMAS DAY PAST.

TOM C.

WHAT KIND OF SCROOGES HAVE YOU WORKING ON CHRISTMAS DAY, FRIEND?

ACTUALLY, LAST WEEK'S ICE STORM DID A BIT OF DAMAGE.

I VOLUNTEERED TO WORK TODAY. FER TRIPLE OVERTIME, OF COURSE.

I'VE GOT SIX KIDS AT HOME. I WANNA GIVE 'EM EVERYTHING I CAN FOR CHRISTMAS. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.

THANKS FOR THE SAVE!

UNFORTUNATELY, MY FRIEND, I *DON'T* KNOW HOW IT IS.

THAT'S WHY I MADE MYSELF A PROMISE LAST NIGHT.

I'M SO NEW TO METROPOLIS, I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO REALLY GET TO KNOW ANYONE YET.

I HATED DUCKING OUT OF THE DAILY PLANET CHRISTMAS PARTY, BUT I WAS HAVING TROUBLE DEALING WITH IT.

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS IN *METROPOLIS* WAS GOING TO BE SPENT ALONE.

I HAD TO DO *SOMETHING* TO TAKE MY MIND OFF IT.

NORMALLY, I *CONSCIOUSLY* LIMIT MY INVOLVEMENT WITH CRIMEFIGHTING IN METROPOLIS. OTHERWISE I'D DO *NOTHING* ELSE.

BUT LAST NIGHT I DECIDED TO GIVE METROPOLIS A VERY *SPECIAL* PRESENT.

A CHRISTMAS WITHOUT *CRIME*.

I'VE BEEN AT THIS FOR HOURS, DARTING FROM ONE *CRISIS* TO ANOTHER EVER SINCE. OBVIOUSLY, *CRIMINALS* AREN'T TAKING THE DAY OFF!

FOR *EXAMPLE...!*

BRING LING LING LIN

PUB

Nolan PUB

JEWELRY

Julie's JEWELRY

VIDEO WORLD

CLOSED FOR X-MAS

C'MON! WE'LL BE OUTTA THE COUNTY BEFORE THE COPS CAN FINISH THEIR CHRISTMAS *DONUTS!*

HO, HO, *HO!*

WH-WHAT'S *HE* DOIN' HERE?!

DON'T HE HAVE *FAMILY* TA BE WITH?

HEY, LOOK WHO'S *TALKIN'!*

IF I DON'T MAKE TRACKS, I'LL BE SPENDIN' NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH *DAD* IN *COUNTY JAIL!*

YOWTCH!

WHAT A WASTE! EVERY YEAR, MORE WRAPPIN' TA THROW OUT, MORE RIBBON, MORE--

--hmh?

BLANG

CHRISTMAS AIN'T NO TIME FER GUNS...!

THERE'S THE LAST ONE!

MUST'VE TRIPPED OVER THAT TRASH CAN LID!

IT'S ABOUT TIME I CAUGHT A BREAK!

"BUT BREAKS WERE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN AS MORNING STRETCHED TO AFTERNOON--

"--AND SUPERMAN TACKLED EVERY THREAT, FROM RENEGADE ROBOTS TO TEENAGED MUGGERS, WITH SINGLEMINDED, NEARLY OBSESSIVE DETERMINATION.

"BUT SO INTENT WAS SUPERMAN THAT HIS SOLITARY FOCUS OVERLOOKED THE EVERYDAY HEROISM OF THE VERY PEOPLE HE'D SWORN TO PROTECT.

"A CONCERNED NEIGHBOR DIALING 911.

"A PASSERBY TRIPPING A FIRE ALARM AT THE SMELL OF SMOKE.

"A FED-UP COMMUNITY TAKING BACK ONE MORE CORNER FROM THE ADDICT-MAKERS."

"BUT AS EVENING ARRIVED, THOSE PARALLEL PURPOSES WERE DESTINED TO MEET--

--ON A MOST UNLIKELY PLAYING FIELD."

THANK YOU ALL ONCE AGAIN, FOR SPENDING YOUR CHRISTMAS--

FEED THE HOMELESS

--AND $1,000 A PLATE, TO HELP MAKE LIFE A BIT EASIER FOR THOSE LESS FORTUNATE. AND NOW THAT THE PROCEEDS HAVE BEEN GATHERED--

MERR

--MR. *MILTON VARNEY*, HIMSELF A FORMER RESIDENCE-CHALLENGED INDIVIDUAL, NOW ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER STREET SHELTER, HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS A SYMBOL OF HOPE. HE WILL *PERSONALLY* TAKE YOUR DONATIONS TO THE SHELTER.

I'VE GOT A *BETTER* IDEA, HOLLIS--

--WHY DON'T *I* TAKE THEM?

UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO MAKE THIS SPOKESMODEL *TRULY* BRAINLESS!

ROLAND! WH-WHAT'S THE *MEANING* OF THIS?!?

IT'S SIMPLE, HOLLIS--I'M *BROKE!*

THAT BOLD FORAY I TOOK INTO THE *COMMODITIES MARKET* WENT BUST!

AND I CAN'T STAND THE IDEA THAT YOU BLEEDING HEARTS ARE GIVING PERFECTLY GOOD MONEY TO *BUMS* WHEN IT COULD KEEP *ME* LIVING IN THE MANNER I DESERVE. WHICH IT *WILL*--

--ONCE I GET IT TO *VENEZUELA!*

WHA-- *OW!*

M-MY *GUN--!*

THAT'S NOT EXACTLY WHAT I CALL *HOLIDAY SPIRIT.*

YOU! I WAS *AFRAID* YOU MIGHT STICK YOUR NOSE IN THIS! THAT'S WHY--

EXIT

EXIT

--I TOOK PRECAUTIONS!

I SPENT THE LAST OF MY SAVINGS ON THIS DEVICE! IF ANY OF THE WIRES ARE BROKEN-- OR *MELTED*-- IT GOES OFF!

TIK

AND IT'S ALL CONNECTED TO THIS *DEAD MAN'S SWITCH!* IF I'M SHOT OR STRUCK AND MY FINGER LETS GO... *KABOOM!*

I'M GETTING *OUT* OF HERE-- WHETHER I TAKE EVERYBODY *WITH* ME IS UP TO *YOU!*

CAN'T MELT THE BOMB, OR TEAR IT LOOSE, WITHOUT SETTING OFF A BLAST THAT COULD COLLAPSE THIS ENTIRE BUILDING!

EVEN IF I DIVED IN AT SUPER-SPEED, SWOOPED ROLAND INTO THE SKY, THE BOMB WOULD STILL BLOW *HIM* UP! AND I CAN'T *ALLOW* THAT!

MISTER, CONSIDERING IT'S *CHRISTMAS*, I'LL GIVE YOU TO THE COUNT OF THREE BEFORE I--

WHA--?

AW, YA OL' GRINCH!

C'MON, SUPERMAN, I'M KEEPIN' THE *BUTTON* DOWN.

POP THIS FELLER AN' LET'S GET ON WITH SUPPER!

MY PLEASURE.

THAP

GUARDS, EVACUATE THE BUILDING! AND CALL THE BOMB SQUAD! I'LL--

--WE'LL--

--SEE THAT THINGS STAY SAFE 'TIL THEY ARRIVE!

THANKS AGAIN, MILT-- I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

HEY, THIS IS MY CITY, TOO. AN' IT TAKES *EVERY ONE* OF US TO MAKE IT SAFE!

HECK, A MAN'D HAVE TA BE *CRAZY* TA THINK HE COULD DO IT *ALONE*.

YEAH.

I GUESS HE *WOULD* AT THAT.

WELL, UM, THANKS AGAIN.

I'M IN NO RUSH, ACTUALLY.

MAYBE I SHOULD STICK AROUND AND ESCORT YOU OVER TO THE MISSION AFTER YOU FINISH YOUR MEAL.

ONLY ON ONE CONDITION...

WH--?

...THAT YOU JOIN ME FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER.

IT WOULD BE MY *PLEASURE*, MILT.

BEING ALONE IS... DIFFICULT.

BUT CHRISTMAS-- AND *LIFE*--IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, M-MISS LANE.

MAYBE WITH A LITTLE *LUCK* AND SOME HARD *WORK*, I *CAN* HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AFTER ALL.

WE BOTH WILL, GEORGE.

I'M MEETING SOMEONE A LITTLE BIT LATER BUT I'VE GOT A FREE COUPLE OF HOURS...

...WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GRAB A CUP OF COFFEE AND TALK SOME MORE?

I'D LIKE TO HEAR A LITTLE MORE ABOUT *YOU*.

I'D LIKE THAT VERY MUCH, MS. LANE.

PLEASE, GEORGE, CALL ME LOIS.

END

NEW GODS

A Highfather Christmas

NEW YORK CITY ON CHRISTMAS EVE...

...WHEN THE CITY IS MAGICAL...

...THE PACE IS FRENETIC...

...AND THE SHOPPERS ARE LEGION!

LOOK, ORION. THE CITY IS FAIRLY BURSTING WITH GOOD CHEER.

SO NO LONG FACE TONIGHT.

THIS IS A TIME OF CELEBRA-TION!

Merry Christmas
from
Walter Simonson - writer
Sal Buscema - artist
Lee Loughridge - colorist
John Costanza - letterer

Happy Days

SUCH FRIVOLOUS GAIETY IS NOT FOR ME, HIGHFATHER.

I AM A WARRIOR, NOT A MERRY-MAKER.

LOOK AGAIN, ORION. THIS DELIGHT, THIS INNOCENCE, IS ONE OF THE REASONS THE DEEP WARS ARE FOUGHT...

...TO SAFEGUARD SUCH JOY.

THAT IS WHY WE HAVE COME TO EARTH THIS NIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS.

EVEN THE FINEST WARRIOR OF THE NEW GODS MUST PUT ASIDE HIS ARMOR...

...AND LET SUCH SPIRIT TOUCH HIS HEART.

PERHAPS, BUT--

HEY! HEY, YOU WITH THE BEARD!

GEEZ, WHERE THE DEVIL HAVE YOU PEOPLE BEEN?

I'VE GOT A LINE OF PARENTS AND KIDS IN SANTA'S KINGDOM A MILE LONG AND THEY'RE READY TO *TORCH* THE ENTIRE DEPARTMENT STORE!

YOU'RE *SUPPOSED* TO BE FAT!

AND HE'S *TOO TALL!* I DISTINCTLY ASKED FOR A *SHRIMP* FOR THE ELF!

WHAT MANNER OF *EFFRONTERY* IS THIS? KNOW THAT BEFORE YOU STANDS--

PEACE, ORION.

THIS IS THE *SEASON OF* PEACE, NOT WAR...

... AND CLEARLY, THIS GENTLEMAN HAS A PROBLEM.

I'M SURE YOUR WIFE WOULD LIKE IT...

PROBLEM? *PROBLEM?* BUDDY, I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM! YOU GOT A PROBLEM!

AND IF YOU AN' YER AGENCY THINK YOU'RE GETTING A FULL NIGHT'S WAGES OUT OF THIS *DEBACLE*, YOU GOT ANOTHER THINK COMIN'!

...I WONDER IF THIS IS TOO EXPENSIVE...

GEEZ, IT'S LIKE I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING *MYSELF* AROUND HERE!

LAVERNE! THELMA! GET THESE GUYS INTO THEIR COSTUMES RIGHT AWAY!

YES, MR. PEASLEY.

BUT...

OH, DEAR.

WHY ME? WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE *THIS?*

THEY LOOK *RIDICULOUS!* *LAVERNE! THELMA!* AFTER WE CLOSE TONIGHT, COLLECT YOUR PAYCHECKS AND *GET OUT!*

WHAT KID IS GONNA BELIEVE THIS MOTH-EATEN HIPPIE *ABE LINCOLN* IS REALLY *SANTA CLAUS?*

AND THE ELF LOOKS LIKE A *REJECT* FROM SOME OLD SCHWARZENEGGER FLICK!

WHERE'S MY *ANTACIDS?* AND AS FOR YOU CLOWNS...

BE AT EASE, MY GOOD MAN.

ANNOUNCE TO THE CHILDREN THAT SANTA CLAUS WILL BE WITH THEM SHORTLY.

URRK?

NOW *LEAVE* US AND WE SHALL ENDEAVOR TO CORRECT THE SITUATION.

WHEW! WHAT A *GRIP* THAT OLD GEEZER HAS!

THANK YOU KINDLY FOR ALL YOUR HELP, LADIES. DO NOT WORRY.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS WILL SOFTEN MR. PEASLEY'S HEART

AND IF THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS DOESN'T, I SHALL *GLADLY* TAKE A HAND.

IS THIS... *FOOL...* A SAMPLE OF THE JOY AND INNOCENCE YOU SPOKE OF EARLIER, HIGHFATHER?

NO, ORION. BUT THIS IS NOT ABOUT MR. PEASLEY OR THIS ESTABLISHMENT OR EVEN ABOUT US.

IT IS ABOUT THOSE WAITING CHILDREN WHO ARE THE FUTURE.

IT IS NO DISHONOR FOR A WARRIOR TO LOVE CHILDREN. SURELY *THEY* ARE WORTH A LITTLE OF OUR TIME... AND CONSIDER-ATION.

YOU ARE RIGHT, HIGH-FATHER. AS USUAL, I HAVE SPOKEN RASHLY. MY PLACE IS IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE...

...I AM TOO SELDOM AMONG THE YOUNG.

THAT WE SHALL REMEDY THIS VERY NIGHT!

BEHOLD!

SAKAHRASSSH

HOW DO I LOOK?

LIKE THE LIVING *EMBODIMENT* OF CHRISTMAS, HIGHFATHER.

AND I... I DO MAKE A VERY *LARGE* CHRISTMAS ELF!

PING PING PING PING

MOTHER BOX! SHE CALLS TO ME,

SHE SAYS... I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

SHE WOULD RESHIFT THE ATOMS AND UNDO HER WORK TO REVEAL...

PING PING PING PING PING

... ORION'S TRUE FACE, THE FACE THAT SHOWS HIS *DARK SIDE.*

AND YET, TONIGHT, THAT FACE WILL SERVE *ANOTHER* PURPOSE!

I WILL BECOME SANTA'S *GNOME!*

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I WILLINGLY GIVEN UP THE PEACEFUL VISAGE MOTHER BOX WEAVES FOR ME...

... BUT NEVER BEFORE HAS THERE BEEN SUCH GOOD CAUSE!

I AM READY.

THEN LET THE MAGIC *BEGIN!*

THE SUITS UPSTAIRS ARE GOING TO FRY ME FOR THIS FIASCO!

I WONDER IF THE BOOK DEPARTMENT HAS ANY GOOD PAPER-BACKS ON WRITING RÉSUMÉS!

SANTA WILL BE ALONG ANY MINUTE, REALLY!

I SWEAR IF I HEAR THAT ONE MORE TIME, I'M GONNA--

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW.

WAAAAH!

ELGIN! YOU WON'T EVEN FIND COAL IN YOUR STOCKING IF YOU KEEP--

SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS IN SANTA'S KINGDOM BEGIN TO DIM...

...A CHILLY WIND SEEMS TO SPRING UP FROM NOWHERE AND...

WHAT IN BLAZES--? JINGLE BELLS?

THRAPRING-ING-ING!

MOM?

HO! HO! HO! HO! A MERRY CHRISTMAS! HO! HO! HO!

I MUST APOLOGIZE TO YOU ALL, *ESPECIALLY* TO THE CHILDREN. I AM SORRY I WAS DELAYED.

AS YOU KNOW, TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS I HAVE *MUCH* TO DO...

...BUT I AM HERE NOW AND I SHALL NOT LEAVE UNTIL I HAVE GREETED EACH AND EVERY *ONE* OF YOU.

NOW COME. LET US BEGIN. *DEIRDRE*, ISN'T IT?

I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN *ESPECIALLY* GOOD THIS YEAR.

AND WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?

A TINY VOICE WHISPERS IN SANTA'S EAR...

THIS IS MY CHRISTMAS GNOME, ORION. HE FINDS WONDERFUL SURPRISES INSIDE MY BAG.

THIS PRESENT, I BELIEVE, BEARS THE YOUNG LADY'S NAME.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, DEIRDRE...

A SMALL GASP IS SANTA'S REWARD.. THAT AND..

OH, SANTA HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU I MEAN HOW DID YOU KNOW DEIRDRE'S NAME I TOLD HER WE COULD ONLY GO WINDOW SHOPPING IT'S BEEN SO ROUGH AND I CAN'T AFFORD ANYTHING RIGHT NOW AND...

SHHHHHHH. THIS IS A SEASON FOR MIRACLES, EVEN LITTLE ONES.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND THE BLESSINGS OF THE SEASON, TO YOU AND YOURS.

NOW THEN, JARED, ISN'T IT?

AND HAVE YOU BEEN A GOOD BOY THIS YEAR, MY LITTLE MAN?

HUMMPH! WHERE ARE THOSE *TOYS* COMING FROM?

I'LL HAVE TO CHECK THE STOCK AUTHORIZATION--

YOU'RE THE MANAGER, AREN'T YOU?

YES, MADAM?

I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT *YOU* AND YOUR STORE HAVE MADE THIS THE BEST CHRISTMAS DEIRDRE AND I HAVE *EVER* HAD.

I'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO *THANK YOU* ENOUGH.

AND I'LL NEVER *FORGET* WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR US. I HOPE YOU HAVE A *WONDERFUL* CHRISTMAS.

THE HOURS SPEED QUICKLY PAST...

THERE ARE SMILES AND LAUGHTER AND BOATS AND DOLLS AND CARS AND BALLS AND ACTION FIGURES APLENTY...

...AND WHEN THE LAST CHILD WALKS AWAY WITH THE LAST TOY, IT IS LONG PAST CLOSING...

...EVEN FOR A CHRISTMAS EVE IN NEW YORK CITY.

THE BAG IS NEARLY EMPTY, SANTA.

YES. OUR WORK HERE IS ALMOST OVER.

UH, LOOK...YOU GUYS WERE GREAT. REALLY GREAT! I MEAN...I'M *SORRY* I SAID SOME STUFF EARLIER BUT...

...WHERE DID ALL THOSE PRESENTS COME FROM AND HOW DID YOU APPEAR LIKE THAT AND HOW COME YOU KNEW ALL THE KIDS' NAMES AND...

I'M *SANTA CLAUS*, MR. PEASLEY. I KNOW *EVERYBODY'S* NAME.

AND WE EVEN HAVE SOMETHING HERE FOR *YOU*.

NEXT YEAR, I HOPE *YOU REMEMBER* SOMETHING OF THE *TRUE* SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS...

...AND PERHAPS YOU'LL FIND A SANTA CLAUS MUCH *CLOSER* TO HOME.

NOW ORION AND I MUST BE GONE IN A TRICE; WE STILL HAVE MUCH SORTING OF NAUGHTY AND NICE.

SO REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE POEM SO BRIGHT...

...HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL... AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

THERE IS A SOUND LIKE A THOUSAND DISTANT ICICLES, ALL SHATTERING AT ONCE...

...FOLLOWED, PERHAPS, BY JUST THE FAINTEST TINKLE OF JINGLE BELLS.

HEY, MR. PEASLEY! AM I TOO LATE?

A *HAT!* HE GAVE ME A BRAND-NEW *SANTA CLAUS* HAT!

THE F TRAIN WAS *STUCK* BETWEEN STATIONS FOR FIVE *HOURS!* AND *SHORT STUFF* CAUGHT A BAD COLD AND COULDN'T MAKE IT!

AND YOU ARE--?

HORACE APPLEGATE! FROM THE *AGENCY!* OH, PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU GOT SOMEBODY *ELSE!*

I REALLY *NEEDED* THIS GIG! THERE'S *NOTHING* OUT THERE RIGHT NOW FOR OUT-OF-WORK SHAKESPEAR-EAN ACTORS!

IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT.

LAVERNE? THELMA? FORGET WHAT I SAID EARLIER.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE GRINCH TALKING.

MR. PEASLEY!

NOT ANOTHER WORD! IT'S LONG PAST CLOSING AND IT'S STILL CHRISTMAS EVE. BARELY.

EVERYBODY GO HOME TO YOUR FAMILIES.

WE'LL CLEAN UP SANTA'S KINGDOM THE DAY AFTER TOMORRON.

DON'T WORRY, MR. APPLEGATE. GETTING STUCK IN THE SUBWAY HAPPENS TO EVERY-BODY. I'LL SEE YOU GET PAID.

AND THANK YOU. THANK YOU ALL.

FUNNY. THE OLD ARTIFICIAL TREES SEEM A BIT BRIGHTER SOMEHOW.

THEY ALMOST SMELL OF EVERGREEN... BUT THAT ISN'T POSSIBLE.

STILL, MIGHT NOT BE TOO SOON TO START PRACTICING THE SANTA ROUTINE. AFTER ALL, HE GAVE ME THE HAT...!

MAYBE I'LL SEE THAT A LITTLE EXTRA SOMETHING GETS INTO THE PAY ENVELOPES OF ALL THE EMPLOYEES WHO HAD TO STAY LATE TONIGHT.

YEAH. THAT WOULDN'T BE SUCH A BAD IDEA.

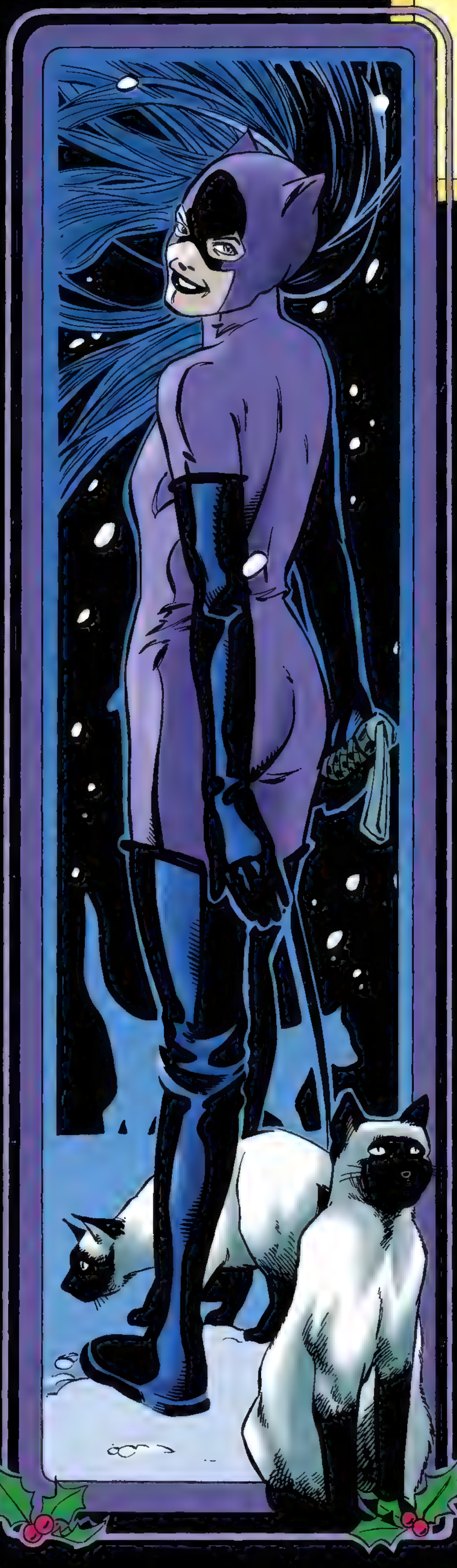
34TH ST

DA DA DUM DUM DA DA DUM... HAD A VERY SHINY NOSE...

Fin

Bearing Gifts We Traverse Afar

DENNIS O'NEIL	WRITER
JESSE DELPERDANG	PENCILLER
MIKE SELLERS	INKER
LEE LOUGHRIDGE	COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA	LETTERER



THERE ISN'T A WHOLE BAGFUL OF HOLIDAY SPIRIT AROUND HERE TONIGHT.
MERRY CHRISTMAS?
I'LL GIVE YOU MERRY CHRISTMAS!
I'LL SMOKE EVERYONE IN THIS JOINT AND HOWDAYA LIKE THAT, TRA LA LA?

TAKE IT EASY, HARRY.

WHO IS IT YER LOOKIN' FOR, AGAIN?

MARIA SAWYER. AN' HER KID.

WHY'S IT YOU WANT THIS FRAIL, IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKIN'.

NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF MY BUSINESS.

IT AIN'T BUT I'LL TELL YA ANYHOW.

THIS AFTERNOON HER OLD MAN KILLED MY BROTHER OVER IN BLACKGATE. I CAN'T GET TO HIM, BUT I *CAN* GET TO HIS WIFE AN' BRAT--

--AN' WHEN HE HEARS WHAT I DONE TO 'EM, HE AIN'T GONNA LIKE IT AT ALL.

'FORE SHE GOT MARRIED, MARIA USETA HANG WITH THAT FORTUNE TELLER OVER ON QUARTER STREET. CALLS HIMSELF SIR MELCHIOR. MAYBE HE CAN TELL YOU WHERE SHE IS.

SHE'S DRIVIN' A WHITE STATION WAGON. ANYBODY SEES IT, LEMME HEAR.

SUTLIVE'S PUB

SUTLIVE'S PUB

THE DISGUISE I'M WEARING SLOWS ME, SO I DON'T GET TO THE STREET UNTIL HARRY AND HIS BOY SCOUTS ARE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY.

I DON'T KNOW MARIA SAWYER BUT I AM ACQUAINTED WITH--

--HARRY AND HIS LATE BROTHER. IF YOU CALLED THEM POND SCUM--

ANOTHER IS THAT MARIA'S HUSBAND ONCE DID ME A FAVOR.

THE LAST ONE IS JUST THIS--I DON'T LIKE GOONS WHO HURT MOTHERS AND KIDS.

NOT EVER, BUT ESPECIALLY NOT ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

--YOU'D BE PAYING THEM A COMPLIMENT. THAT'S ONE THING.

SO THE GUY WHO'S PAYING ME A HALF MIL TO STEAL THIS TRINKET WILL HAVE TO WAIT. I WON'T BE MEETING HIM HERE TONIGHT BUT--

--MAYBE SANTA WILL LEAVE SOMETHING EXTRA-NICE UNDER HIS TREE TOMORROW.

IT TAKES ME ALMOST TWENTY MINUTES TO REACH QUARTER STREET AND THE FORTUNE TELLER'S CRIB.

DR. MELCHIOR
ASTROLOGER TO ROYALTY

I ASSUME HARRY'S BEEN AND GONE ALREADY--

--SO I DON'T WASTE WORDS--

YOU HAVE FOUR SECONDS TO TELL ME WHAT YOU TOLD HARRY RODLEY.

THEN YOU BLEED.

SURELY THIS IS AN APPARITION OCCA-SIONED BY HOLIDAY--

WHPASH

FOUR SECONDS ARE UP.

VERY WELL. I LIED. I TOLD MR. RODLEY THAT MARIA SAWYER IS ATTENDING A DANCE ON FIRST AVENUE--

--A DECEPTION THAT WILL NOT DELAY HIM LONG.

WHERE IS SHE REALLY?

I WILL NOT DO MY FPIEND THE DISSERVICE OF ANSWERING. IF BLEED I MUST, BLEED I SHALL.

LOOK, MEL, I ADMIRE YOUR GUTS. AND LOYALTY. BUT YOUR JUDGMENT STINKS. I'M ON HER SIDE.

PERHAPS YOU ARE. I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TRUST YOU, FOR DEAR MARIA AND HER BABE ARE IN DANGER AND I, OLD AND ENFEEBLED, CAN BE OF LITTLE ASSISTANCE TO THEM.

THEY ARE GONE TO SECURE FUNDS FROM MARIA'S COUSIN WILLY AT HIS PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT, THE MEAT PACKING PLANT ON THE DOCKS.

THANKS.

SORRY. I TRAVEL ALONE.

BUT CAN YOU RECOGNIZE WILLY?

I CAN'T. I WOULDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE MARIA. I NEED MEL.

WAIT. I SHALL ACCOMPANY YOU.

WE PILE INTO HIS ANCIENT WHEELS AND RATTLE THROUGH THE MIDNIGHT STREETS.

WE'D MAKE BETTER TIME WITH A SLEIGH AND EIGHT TINY REINDEER--

--BUT EVENTUALLY WE DO GET THERE.

GOTHAM MEAT

324-75

THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE PLANT IS CLOGGED WITH FARM TRUCKS FULL OF FUTURE HOLIDAY DINNERS ON-THE-HOOF.

MEL SPOTS MARIA ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

THERE SHE IS WITH WILLY--

NO YOU CAN'T CRASH AT MY PLACE. I HEAR HARRY RODLEY'S LOOKIN' FOR YOU AN' I DON' WANNA BE NOWHERE NEAR WHEN HE FINDS YOU.

BUT WE'RE FAMILY--

WE WAS! NOW YOU JUST SOMETHIN' THEY GONNA FIND IN THE GARBAGE.

LOOK, ROUNDING THE CORNER--

I SEE--

GOTHAM CITY MEATS

--HARRY RODLEY'S LIMO.

MARIA, DEAR CHILD, TRUST THIS LADY.

WE HAVE ONLY SECONDS.

I NEED YOUR COAT AND THE KEYS TO YOUR CAR. NOW!

NOW YOU AND THE BABY CLIMB INTO THE BACK OF THAT TRUCK AND--

--COVER YOURSELVES WITH STRAW.

DON'T MOVE 'TIL YOU HEAR FROM MEL OR ME.

-- JUST DOWN THE STREET, MR. RODLEY, HER AN' THE KID--

HARRY--

SKREEEEEEE

IN THE LIGHT, HARRY AND THE SCOUT TROOP WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL THAT I'M NOT MARIA-- ESPECIALLY NOT WHEN THEY'RE BUSY JUMPING TO SAVE THEIR WORTHLESS HIDES.

HE KNOWS THESE WHEELS.

HE'LL CHASE THEM.

FROM HERE ON, I IMPROVISE.

DANGER

THE CITY'S BEEN BUILDING THIS BRIDGE SINCE I WAS A KITTEN. AT THE RATE IT'S GOING, IT'LL BE COMPLETE AT TEN MINUTES PAST ARMAGEDDON.

BUT FOR ONCE--

--I'M GRATEFUL FOR MUNICIPAL INEFFICIENCY.

THERE'S THE END OF THE ROAD. NEXT STOP, THE RIVER -- SEVENTY FEET DOWN.

AIN'T *NOBODY* CAN LIVE THROUGH A FALL LIKE THAT, MR. RODLEY.

YEAH. LET'S GO.

A FEW MINUTES LATER--

YOU'RE SAFE. RODLEY THINKS YOU'RE DEAD.

THERE'S A FREIGHTER LEAVING FROM PIER FORTY AT SIX. BE ON IT. MENTION CATWOMAN--

--AND THE CAPTAIN WILL FIND ROOM FOR YOU. THIS WILL PAY FOR YOUR PASSAGE.

THE LAST OF MY EMERGENCY MONEY.

AND THIS WILL FINANCE YOUR RELOCATION. IT'S WORTH A MIL. YOU CAN GET HALF THAT.

YOU ARE A VERITABLE ANGEL, MY DEAR.

NOT EVEN CLOSE.

NO, I'M ALWAYS A THIEF AND OFTEN A LIAR. BUT I'M ALSO HUMAN AND... WHAT THE HELL.

ON THIS PARTICULAR NIGHT, EVEN THIEVES ARE ALLOWED A LITTLE GOODWILL.

Merry Christmas

MIDNIGHT. CHRISTMAS EVE. A *POTENT* TIME TO DO *EVIL*.

THIS SUMMONING SPELL HAS NOT BEEN ATTEMPTED FOR OVER A CENTURY. THE *PRICE* IS TOO HIGH.

IT SUMMONS A GATE KEEPER WHO OPENS A GATE, BEHIND WHICH IS A SINGLE OBJECT.

ANYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE...

THE PRICE IS YOUR SOUL.

Satan's Little Helper

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

HOW MANY YEARS..? IT'S BEEN SO LONG.

THIS BARGAIN NEVER GOES WELL.

HEED YOU MY RHYME, NOW, ABOUT WHAT YOU COVET...

A WOMAN, A WEAPON, A BAGFUL OF GOLD, ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN PICK UP AND HOLD.

THERE'S ONLY ONE OBJECT BUT IT'S YOURS TO KEEP. WISH WELL AND SMALL, LEST YOU DROP IT AND WEEP.

I'VE TOLD YOU MY PART. YOU KNOW YOUR ROLE... THE GATE OPENS ONCE, ONCE YOU PROMISE YOUR SOUL.

YES...YES... I PROMISE MY SOUL...

WHAT I'M GOING TO PULL OUT OF THERE IS *MORE* THAN WORTH IT...

DADDY..?

WHAT?!? CINDY?!? GO BACK TO BED!!

WHO'S THE FUNNY MAN IN THE RED SUIT?

HE'S ONE OF SANTA'S LITTLE HELPERS, HONEY!

NOW GO BACK TO BED RIGHT NOW!!

SANTA..?

IZZAT MY PRESENT IN DERE?

NO!! HONEY!

MUSN'T GRAB!!

IT IS!!

IT'S BATMAN!!

SANTA GOTS ME BATMAN!!

BARGAIN SEALED. NOW YOU BELONG TO THE FUTURE RANKS OF HELL.

I'LL SEE YOU SOMETIME DOWN BELOW...

HAH!

I LOVE IT!

AHHHH!

DADDY..?

...WHY ARE YOU CRYING? DIDN'T SANTA BRING YOU ANYTHING?

I'M BATMAN, PUNKS!

Ho Ho Ho! Happy Holidays!

GREEN LANTERN

THE VESSEL

MICHAEL JAN FRIEDMAN
writer
ROGER ROBINSON • PHYLLIS NOVIN
penciller *inker*
JOHN COSTANZA • JOHN KALISZ
letterer *colorist*

I CAN SEE THE HEADLINE NOW. "NEW YORK HARBOR BECOMES WORLD'S BUSIEST OIL SLICK."

YEAH, WELL, NOT ON MY WATCH.

I JUST WANT TO KNOW ONE THING.

WHY DO THESE MEGA-DISASTERS ALWAYS POP UP WHEN I'VE GOT TO BE SOMEPLACE?

"THIS NEIGHBOR OF YOURS... IS HE ALWAYS THIS LATE?"

"NOT ALWAYS. IN FACT...

...NOT EVEN USUALLY."

"MORE COFFEE, MY FRIENDS?"

RADU'S
COFFEE

THANKS, RADU.

NONE FOR *ME*, THANKS. I'LL *FLOAT* ALL THE WAY TO THE SYNAGOGUE.

AH, SO *THAT'S* WHERE YOU'RE GOING? AND YOU'RE TAKING *KYLE* WITH YOU?

I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS *JEWISH.*

HE'S *NOT.* HE'S JUST TAGGING ALONG FOR THE *HANUKKAH* SERVICE. SAID IT SOUNDED LIKE *FUN.*

WHICH IT *IS.*

AFTER ALL, IT'S A *CELEBRATION.* TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, JUDAH *MACCABEE* RECOVERED THE HOLY *TEMPLE* FROM THE ROMAN OVERLORD OF PALESTINE.

JUDAH WANTED TO *REDEDICATE* THE TEMPLE TO GOD-- BUT THAT MEANT REKINDLING THE HOLY *FLAME* THAT HAD BURNED THERE.

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE WAS ONLY ENOUGH HOLY OIL TO KEEP THE FLAME GOING FOR A LITTLE WHILE--A *DAY* AT THE MOST.

BUT SOMEHOW, THE FLAME DIDN'T GO *OUT* AFTER A DAY. THE OIL KEPT *BURNING*--

--FOR AN ENTIRE *WEEK,* RIGHT? AND THEY CALLED IT "*THE MIRACLE OF THE OIL.*"

SO...

KYLE! WHERE'VE YOU *BEEN?*

SPEAKING OF OIL...

I, ER... STOPPED TO HELP SOMEONE CHANGE A *FLAT*. GUESS I LOST TRACK OF THE *TIME*.

SO MUCH SO I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO RECHARGE MY RING. BUT THAT CAN WAIT TILL LATER.

THIS IS MY SISTER *BECCAH*. WE'VE GOT TO *RUN* WE'RE GONNA GET TO *TEMPLE* ON TIME.

RIGHT. SO, ER... WHAT ARE WE *WAITING* FOR?

WOW. NATHAN DIDN'T TELL ME HIS SISTER WAS SO HOT.

YOU SEEM TO KNOW YOUR *HANUKKAH* HISTORY PRETTY WELL, KYLE. I'M *IMPRESSED.*

SHE'S IMPRESSED. YES!

BUT I'LL BET YOU DON'T *BELIEVE* IN MIRACLES.

DON'T GET ME WRONG-- I *RESPECT* A PERSON'S RIGHT TO BELIEVE WHATEVER HE OR SHE *WANTS* TO BELIEVE. IT'S JUST THAT--

YOU JUST DON'T *BELIEVE* IN MIRACLES YOURSELF.

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

BUMP

FAIR ENOUGH. I DIDN'T MEAN TO *PRY.*

HEY-- *PRY* ALL YOU WANT.

JOE'S ART STORE

SALE!! KYLON 50% OFF

SAY, WHY ARE WE IN SUCH A *HURRY,* ANYWAY? DON'T THE SERVICES START AROUND *SUN-DOWN?*

I HAVE TO GET TO TEMPLE A LITTLE EARLIER. AFTER ALL, I'M THE *RABBI.*

SURPRISED?

DIDN'T I *TELL* YOU?

NO, I THINK I WOULD'VE *REMEMBERED* THAT.

AND NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE TO RUN AWAY AND HIDE IN A VERY *DARK* CORNER OF MY EGO.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, KYLE. BELIEVE ME, IT'S NOT THE *FIRST* TIME SOMEONE'S HIT ON ME.

AND IT'S A WHOLE LOT *BETTER* THAN BEING *IGNOR--*

HELP!

HEIL HITLER

HITLER WAS RIGHT

DOE JEW

OH MY GOD.

OTTO!

...COULDN'T HELP IT... SNUCK UP ON ME...

DEATH TO THE JEWS

DIE! JEWS DIE!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT HAPPENED?

...PUNKS, THEY WERE... CAUGHT THEM SPRAYING *SWASTIKAS*...

otto

...TOOK THE *VESSEL* FOR THE ETERNAL FLAME...

SURE. IT'S SOLID *GOLD*.

HAIL HITLER

HATE

DIE

THEY WEREN'T JUST *THIEVES*, NATHAN.

TO BREAK INTO A SYNAGOGUE ON THE EVE OF *HANUKKAH* AND RIP OFF THE *VESSEL*... THAT'S THE WORK OF *HATE-MONGERS*.

I'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS, SEEN IT ON TV-- BUT I NEVER EX-PERIENCED IT FIRST-HAND.

WHOEVER DID THIS... IT MAKES ME FEEL DIRTY BEING ON THE SAME PLANET WITH THEM.

I'M NOT EXACTLY BATMAN, BUT IT DOESN'T TAKE A ROCKET SCIENTIST TO FIGURE OUT THAT THESE SPRAY PAINT CANS MUST'VE BEEN THE ONES USED BY THE VANDALS.

UNUSUAL BRAND. ONLY ONE PLACE AROUND HERE THAT CARRIES IT.

RYLON

PAINT

SOMETIMES BEING AN ARTIST HAS ITS ADVANTAGES.

I KNOW YOU'RE UNDER NO *OBLIGATION* TO HELP ME. BUT THEY'RE SWABBING THIS STUFF OFF THE WALLS OF A *SYNAGOGUE*, AND IF YOU'VE GOT ANY IDEA WHO *BOUGHT* IT...

DARN *RIGHT* I DO.

NO CASH REFUNDS

BIKER TYPE. BOUGHT HALF A DOZEN CANS JUST THIS *MORNING*.

COMES IN HERE ONCE IN A WHILE. SAYS HE'S AN *ARTIST*, THOUGH I GOT MY *DOUBTS*.

UNLESS I'M MISTAKEN, I GOT HIS *NAME* AND *ADDRESS* IN MY FILES. TOOK IT FOR MY *MAILING* LIST A FEW MONTHS AGO.

THANK GOD FOR SMALL *FAVORS*.

HERE IT *IS*. JUST DO *ME* A FAVOR, ALL RIGHT?

"IF HE'S THE ONE WHO *DESECRATED* THE TEMPLE, GIVE HIM HELL FOR *ME*."

HEY, CYRUS...WHERE ARE WE GONNA *SELL* THAT THING?

WHO *CARES*? THE IMPORTANT THING IS *THEY* DON'T HAVE IT.

ALL MY LIFE, JEWS HAVE BEEN *STOMPING* ON ME, TAKING AWAY THE THINGS THAT *MATTERED* TO ME. NOW WE'LL SEE HOW *THEY* LIKE IT.

JEWS DID ALL THAT?

HEY, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? *SOMEBODY* DID!

WHAT THE HECK IS *THAT*?!

OH, MAN... IT'S--!

KEEEE-YOW

COULDN'T RESIST MAKING AN IMPRESSION ON THESE PUNKS. I'LL SQUARE UP WITH THE LANDLORD LATER.

DON'T LET HIM *SCARE* YA! TAKE 'IM!

CYRUS IS *RIGHT*. THERE'S FOUR OF *US* AND ONLY ONE OF *HIM*.!

WHAT *WORLD* HAVE YOU DIRT BAGS BEEN LIVING ON?

A FEW MINUTES AGO, I HEFTED AN *OIL* TANKER. YOU THINK A *TIRE IRON* IS GOING TO STOP ME?

FEEL FREE TO CONTEMPLATE THE *ERROR* OF YOUR WAYS--

--WHILE I'M WRAPPING THAT *IRON* AROUND YOUR--

UH-OH.

DAMN. THE RING--

FORGOT TO RECHARGE IT. IT'S DEAD.

AND MORE THAN LIKELY, SO AM I.

HEY-- SOMETHING'S WRONG.

NOW'S OUR *CHANCE.* LET'S GET THAT TURKEY!

TURKEY IS RIGHT. WITHOUT THE RING I'M JUST A GUY IN GREEN PAJAMAS.

STAND *STILL*, HERO. I'M GONNA CAVE YOUR *HEAD*-- UHNN!

WHAT THE--?

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.

I ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT WHEN THE RING IS DRAINED, IT'S DRAINED.

UNNNGH!

STILL, I'M NOT LOOKING A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH.

KRAK

BETTER BOLT. DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER THIS IS GOING TO LAST.

DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW IT LASTED THIS LONG.

"DELIVER US FROM OUR ENEMIES, LORD--FOR AS HISTORY HAS SHOWN US, THERE ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE AN ABUNDANCE OF THEM.

"AND TEACH US TO EMBRACE OUR FRIENDS--FOR AS HISTORY HAS ALSO SHOWN US, WE ARE BLESSED WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF THEM AS WELL.

"BUT MOST OF ALL, LORD, TEACH US THE VALUE OF PERSEVERANCE AND OF SACRIFICE, WHICH HAVE ENABLED OUR PEOPLE TO ENDURE SINCE THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM...

... AND ALLOWED US TO *RECLAIM* OUR TEMPLE FROM THOSE WHO WOULD *DESECRATE* IT.

FOR IT'S *NOT* JUST IN THE BIBLE THAT *MIRACLES* MAY TAKE PLACE. THEY CAN HAPPEN WHENEVER AND *WHEREVER* GOOD PEOPLE PUT THEIR *MINDS* TO SOMETHING.

AS THE MACCABEES FOUND A LONG TIME AGO, *VALOR* CAN GO A LONG WAY.

FAITH CAN BE MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY *NATURAL* LAW.

AND *HOPE* CAN KEEP A *FLAME* GOING WHEN ITS FUEL SHOULD LONG AGO HAVE RUN *OUT.*

END

FINALLY. IT'S STANDING UP STRAIGHT... ALL THE BRANCHES ARE EVEN... GOOD SIDE'S TOWARDS THE ROOM.

NOW TO TRIM IT.

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST. I'M THE FLASH

THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE...

...WHICH IS NEVER AN EXCUSE TO WAIT UNTIL TWENTY MINUTES BEFORE THE CHRISTMAS PARTY TO START DECORATING... BUT WHADDAYA GONNA DO?

I'VE BEEN SHOPPING. MY GIRL-FRIEND, LINDA, IS NOTORIOUSLY HARD TO BUY FOR. SHE NEVER SAYS WHAT SHE WANTS. NEVER EVEN HINTS. NEVER.

THIS YEAR, THOUGH, I GOT HER THE PERFECT GIFT.

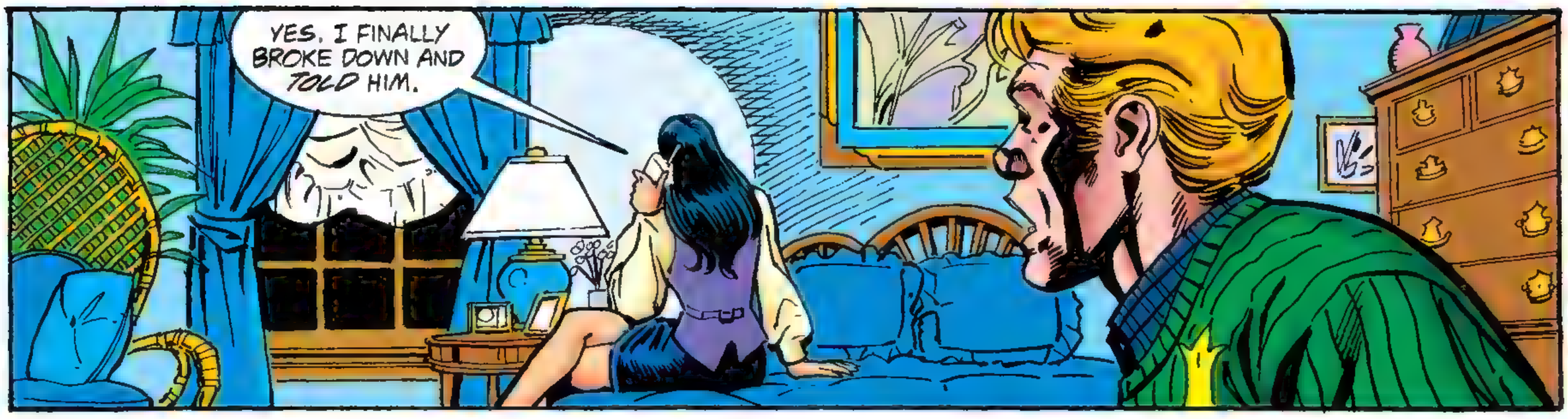
THE FASTEST MICROWAVE OVEN ON EARTH. SO POWERFUL, IT'S ILLEGAL IN NINE STATES. GET THIS BAD BOY WRAPPED, AND--

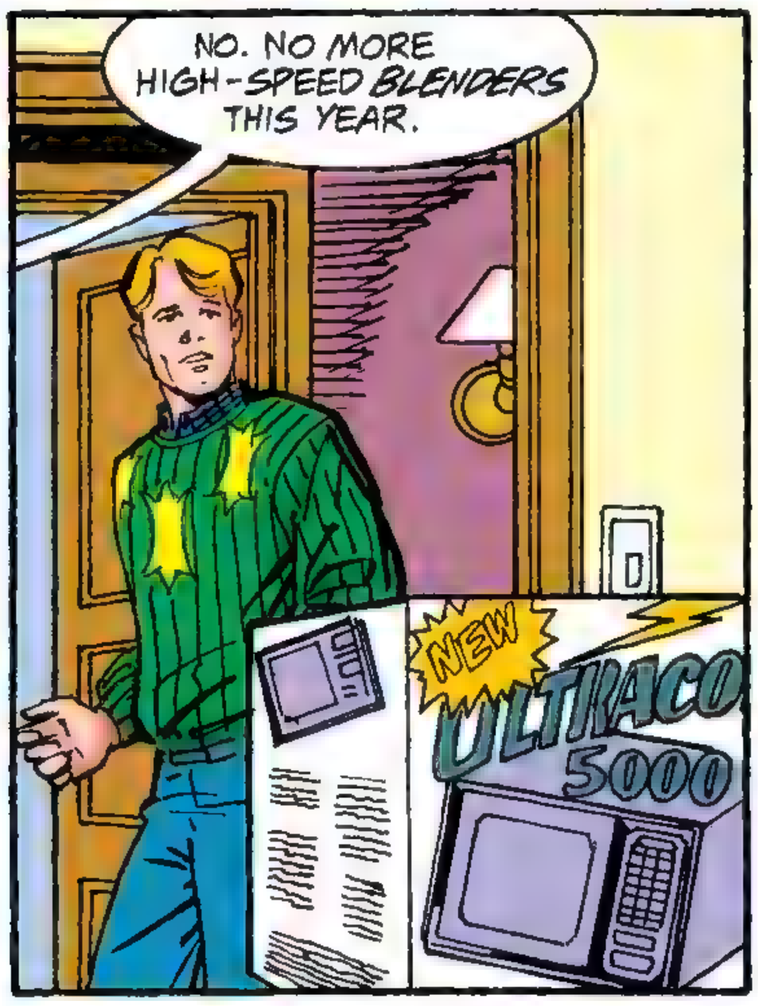
WHOOPS. TAPE? TAPE?

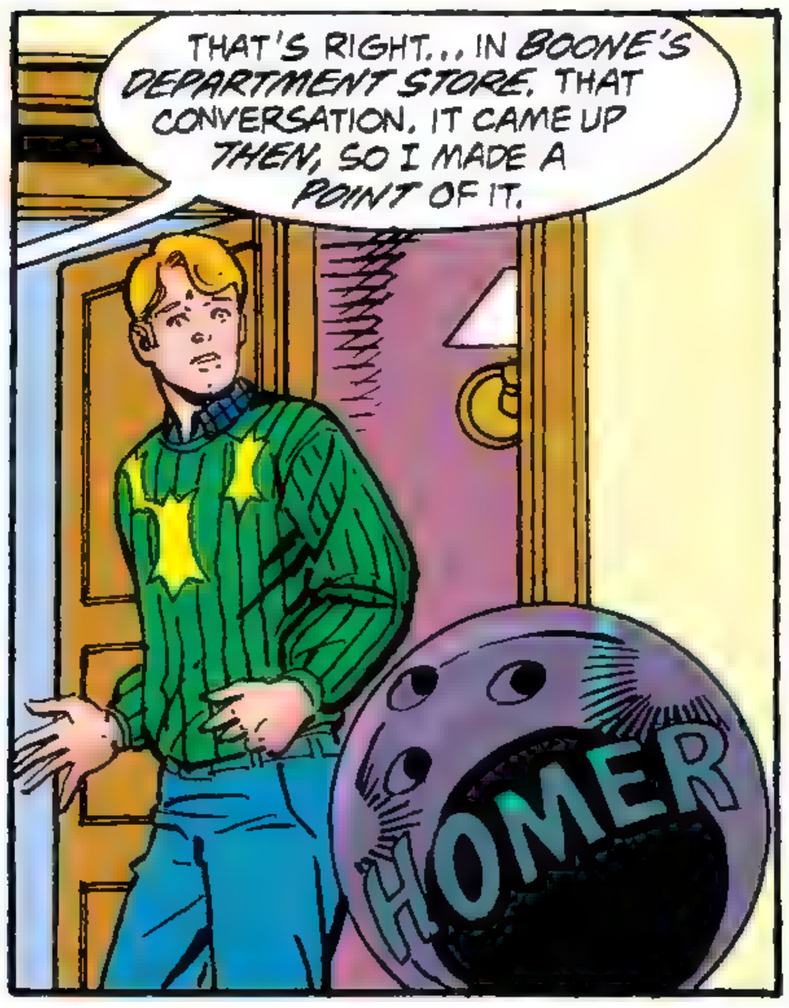
HONEY, HAVE YOU SEEN THE--

WHOOPS AGAIN. ON THE PHONE. DON'T WANT TO INTERRUPT...

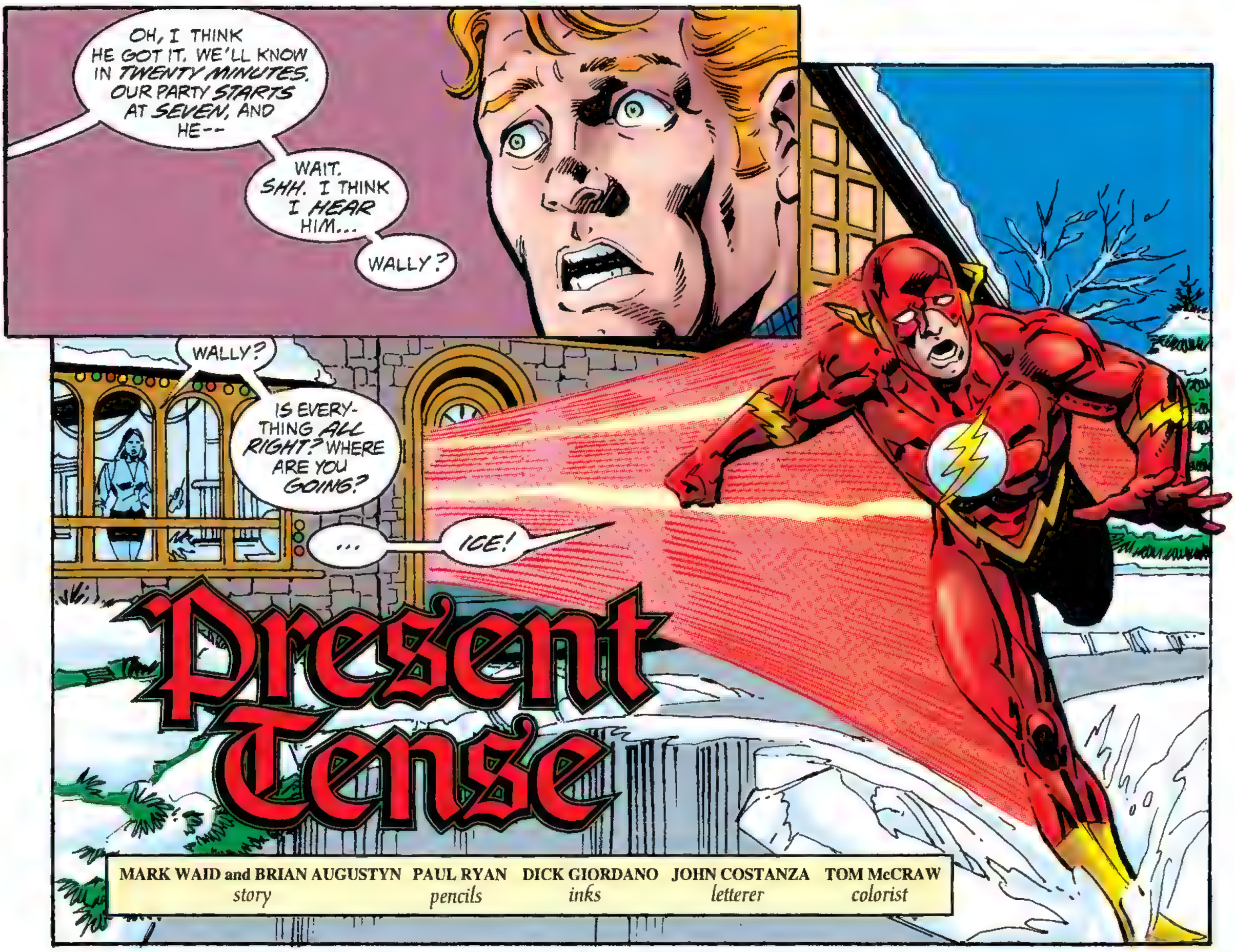
...YES, MOTHER. I THINK I'M IN FOR A TREAT.


YES. I FINALLY BROKE DOWN AND TOLD HIM.


NO. NO MORE HIGH-SPEED BLENDERS THIS YEAR.
NEW
ULTRACO 5000


THAT'S RIGHT... IN BOONE'S DEPARTMENT STORE. THAT CONVERSATION. IT CAME UP THEN, SO I MADE A POINT OF IT.
HOMER

THIS YEAR, WALLY KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS.
NEW
ULTRACO 5000


OH, I THINK HE GOT IT. WE'LL KNOW IN TWENTY MINUTES. OUR PARTY STARTS AT SEVEN, AND HE--
WAIT. SHH. I THINK I HEAR HIM...
WALLY?
WALLY?
IS EVERY-THING ALL RIGHT? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
...
ICE!
Present Tense
MARK WAID and BRIAN AUGUSTYN story
PAUL RYAN pencils
DICK GIORDANO inks
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
TOM McCRAW colorist

"ICE"? OH GOD.

OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD.

BOONE'S

THIIIIIIIIINK...

I DO REMEMBER SHOPPING HERE WITH LINDA... KINDA.

ACTUALLY, ALL I REALLY REMEMBER DISTINCTLY IS A SWEATER, FOR SOME REASON. THAT ONE.

THE ONE THAT LOOKS LIKE THE RAINBOW RAIDER THREW UP ON IT.

THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT, THOUGH. BOYFRIENDS ASIDE, LINDA HAS TASTE. SHE WEARS CLOTHES THAT MAKE A STATEMENT OTHER THAN "SHOOT ME."

WE WERE RIGHT BY THE SWEATER. WHAT WAS SHE TELLING ME? GOD, I DON'T KNOW...

IN DESPERATION, I PANIC AND SPRING FOR A SCARF. NOT THE MOST INTIMATE ITEM, BUT...

A SPLENDID CHOICE, MR. WEST... AND JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME! YOU'RE OUR LAST SALE FOR THE NIGHT!

WRAP THAT FOR YOU?

PLEASE.

IT'S OKAY, RIGHT? GOOD COLOR? SHE'LL LIKE IT?

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE? AND IT'S 100% CASHMERE!

CASHMERE...?

LYNN

LINDA'S ALLERGIC TO CASHMERE.

Infantino's FINE ITALIAN FOOD

AAAAAUGH.

BY THE TIME BOONE'S CLOSES ITS DOORS, I'M TWO TIME ZONES AWAY...

...WHERE THE STORES, THANK GOD, ARE STILL OPEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...

WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA

THINK BACK, GENIUS BOY. SHE DID TELL YOU SOMETHING THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO HER.

WHAT WAS IT?

RODEO DR.

WHAT?

SIR, WE'LL BE CLOSING SOON. IF YOU'RE GOING TO BUY SOMETHING--

I...I

THIS.

Paccinis

THE MAKE UP CASE? MAGNIFICENT... AND ONE OF A KIND. ARE YOU SURE?

IS IT THE MOST EXPENSIVE ONE YOU HAVE? THEN I'M SURE. JUST FILL IT WITH MAKE-UP.. AND HURRY.

GLADLY. IS YOUR LADY FRIEND A SUMMER OR A WINTER?

SHE'S...PRESBYTERIAN. I DON'T KNOW. YOU MEAN HER COLORING? SHE'S... KOREAN...

-SIGH- I'LL DO MY BEST. SHE DOES WEAR MAKE-UP...?

ALL THE TIME. SHE'S A TV NEWS-WOMAN.

THEN SHE HAS PEOPLE DOING MAKEUP FOR HER. SHE HARDLY NEEDS THIS.

WHAT?

I MEAN... YOU'RE RIGHT. I...I CAN'T USE THIS!

SORRY. NO REFUNDS ON COSMETICS.

YEAH?

WAID'S

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU, TOO.

SEVEN-TEN BACK HOME. PARTY'S STARTING, AND WHERE AM I?

IN A CURIO SHOP IN HAWAII, TRYING NOT TO CRY.

DOESN'T MATTER. BURNING DAYLIGHT, I FOUND JUST THE RIGHT BAUBLE. I'LL ARRIVE THE CONQUERING HERO. AT LAST... HURRAY FOR ME!

YEAH. THAT ONE. WRAP IT UP?

CERTAINLY, SIR.

GHAH. SELL A LOT OF THESE *SWEATERS*, DO YOU?

ONLY TO THE *BLIND*. I HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT THE MANAGER WAS THINKING WHEN SHE *ORDERED* THEM. SUPPOSEDLY, THEY'RE *QUITE TRENDY*, BUT...

OKAY. ALL *DONE*. ONE *RING*, READY TO GO.

POST CARDS

CVS

YOU'VE BEEN *VERY* HELPFUL. A *PERSONAL* GIFT, FROM THE *HEART*... THIS SHOULD GO OVER *BIG*.

I WOULD IMAGINE *SO*. WHEN'S THE BIG *DATE*?

WHAT?

I... THOUGHT YOU *KNEW*! THAT'S A *WEDDING BAND*. ACCORDING TO *MAHALUAN LAW*, TO GIVE IT TO YOUR *LOVED* ONE CONSTITUTES A PROPOSAL OF *MARRIAGE*!

A *LOVELY* THOUGHT, DON'T YOU *AGREE*?

NO... TOO *SOON*... NO...

NOT AT THIS EXACT *SECOND*, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING IN, LIKE, AN... *ANKLET*?

MMMM... NO.

AAAAAAAAAGHH

KONA KAILUA

SEVEN-FIFTEEN. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE THE FLASH TO GET ICE? WHAT, AM I FIGHTING CAPTAIN COLD? I'VE BOUGHT ALL THE TIME I CAN AFFORD, AND THEN SOME.

HONG KONG IS MY LAST SHOT...

...GIFT...

...OR NO GIFT.

BEAUTIFUL, ARE THEY *NOT*? TAKE THEM *BOTH*!

I'M SUFFERING *ENOUGH* PUNISHMENT, THANK YOU. BESIDES, I HAVE A HUNCH LINDA'S NOT GOING TO WANT TO LOOK AT A GUY IN A *MASK* FOR A *LONG TIME* AFTER TONIGHT.

FORGET IT. IT'S *OVER*.

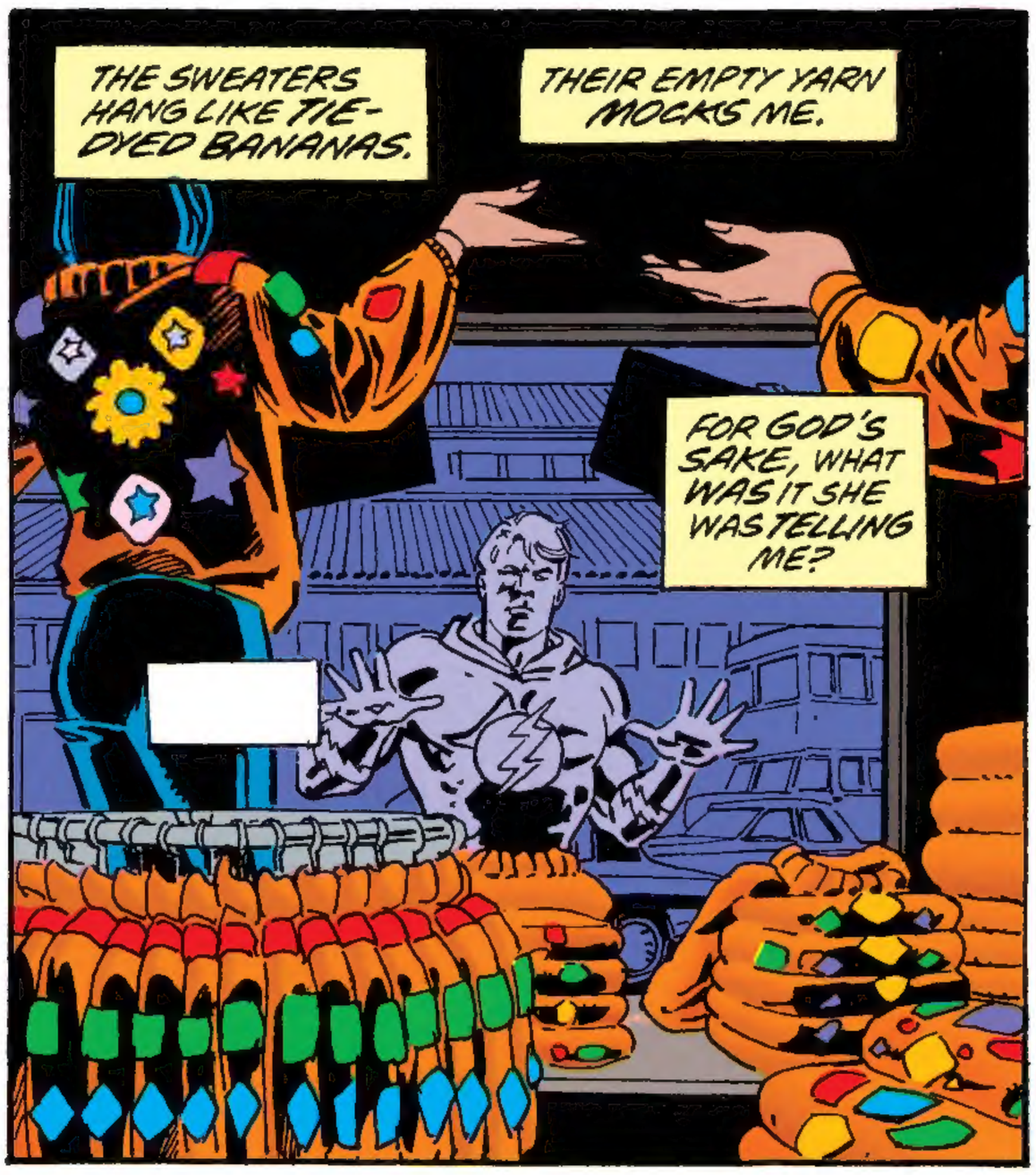
HO

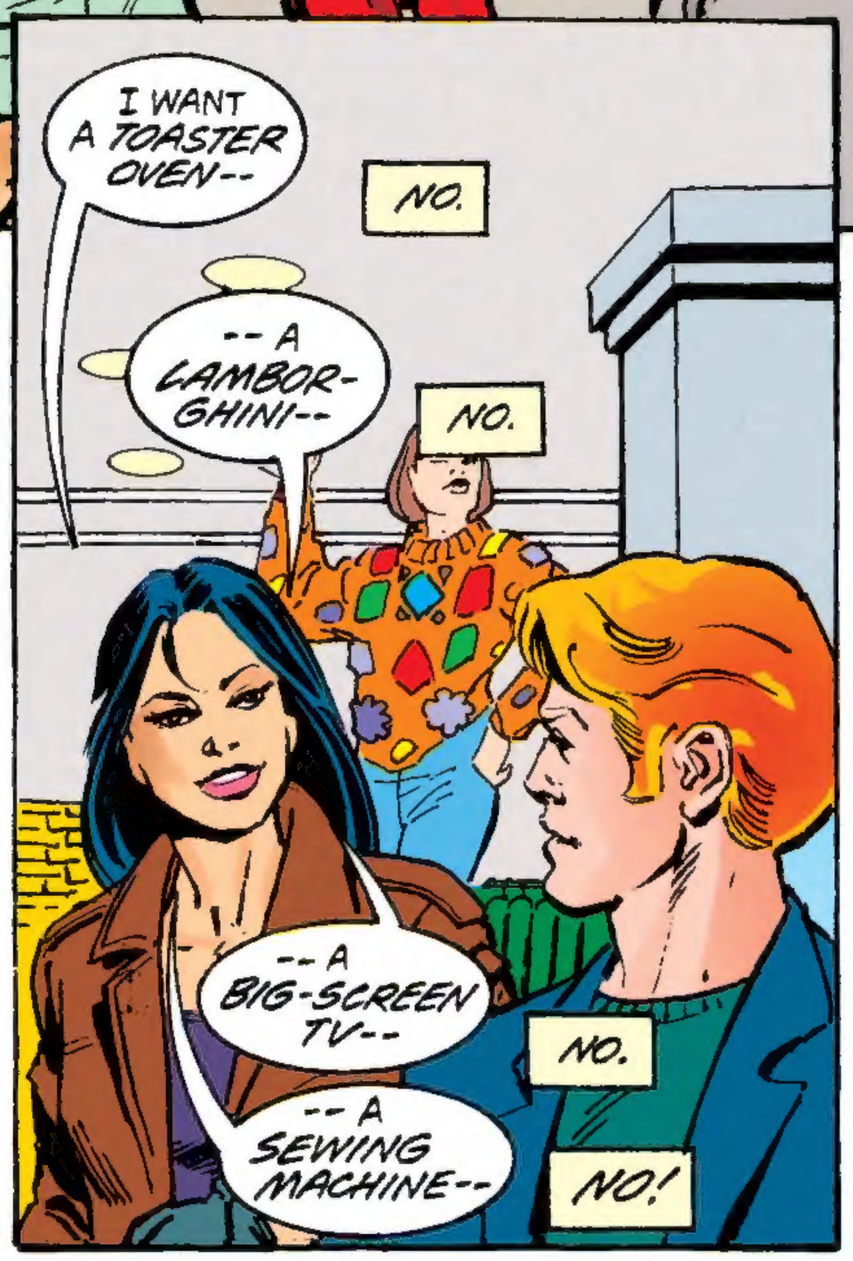
HO

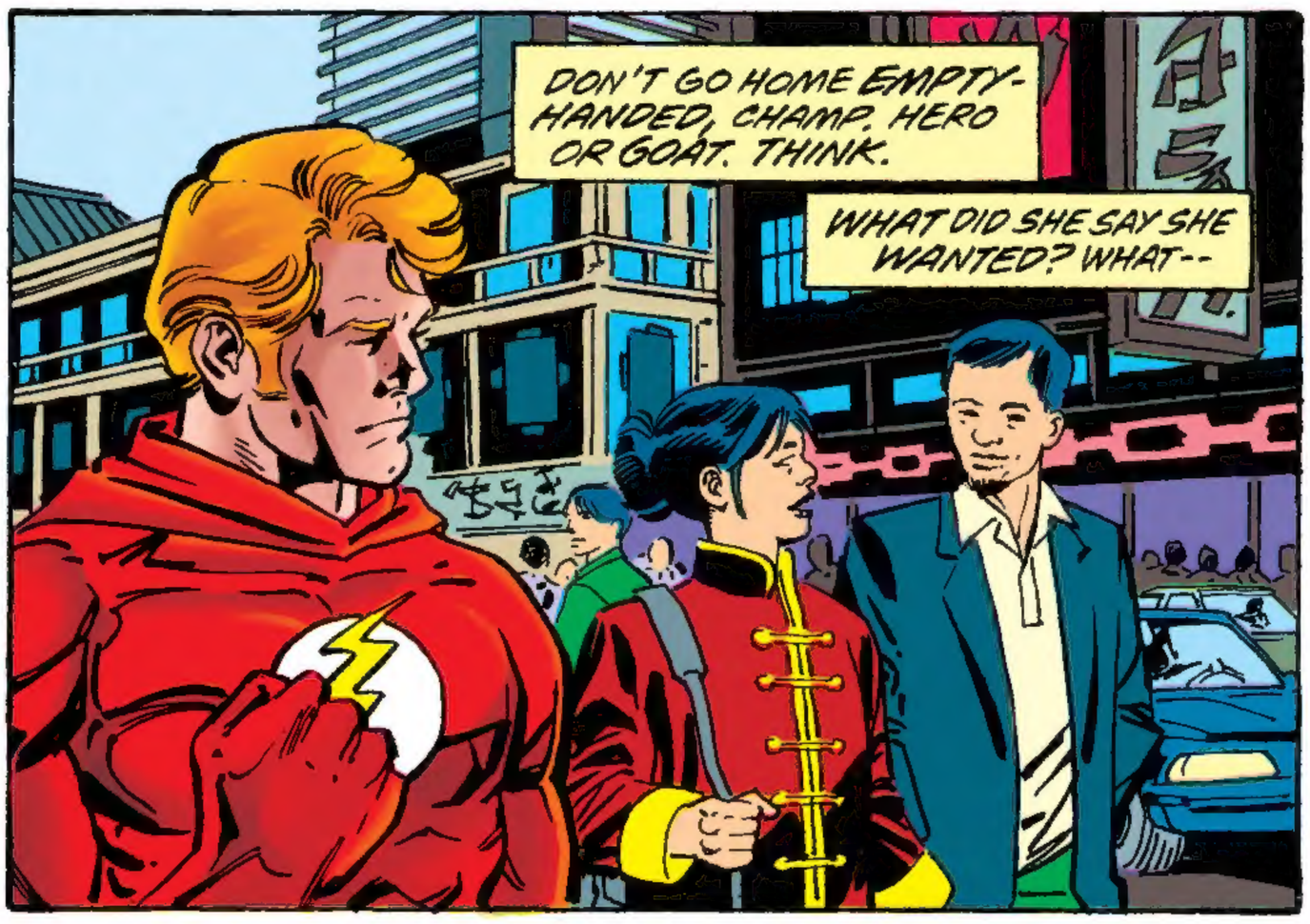
HO.

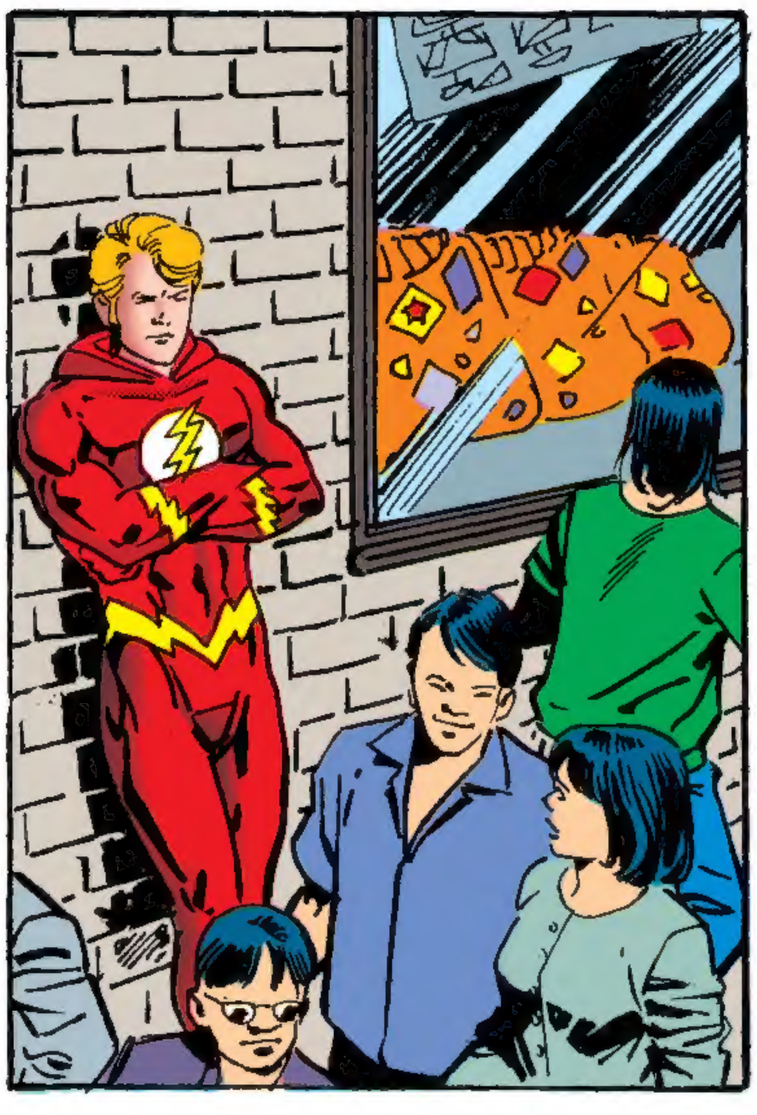
WHAT THE...?

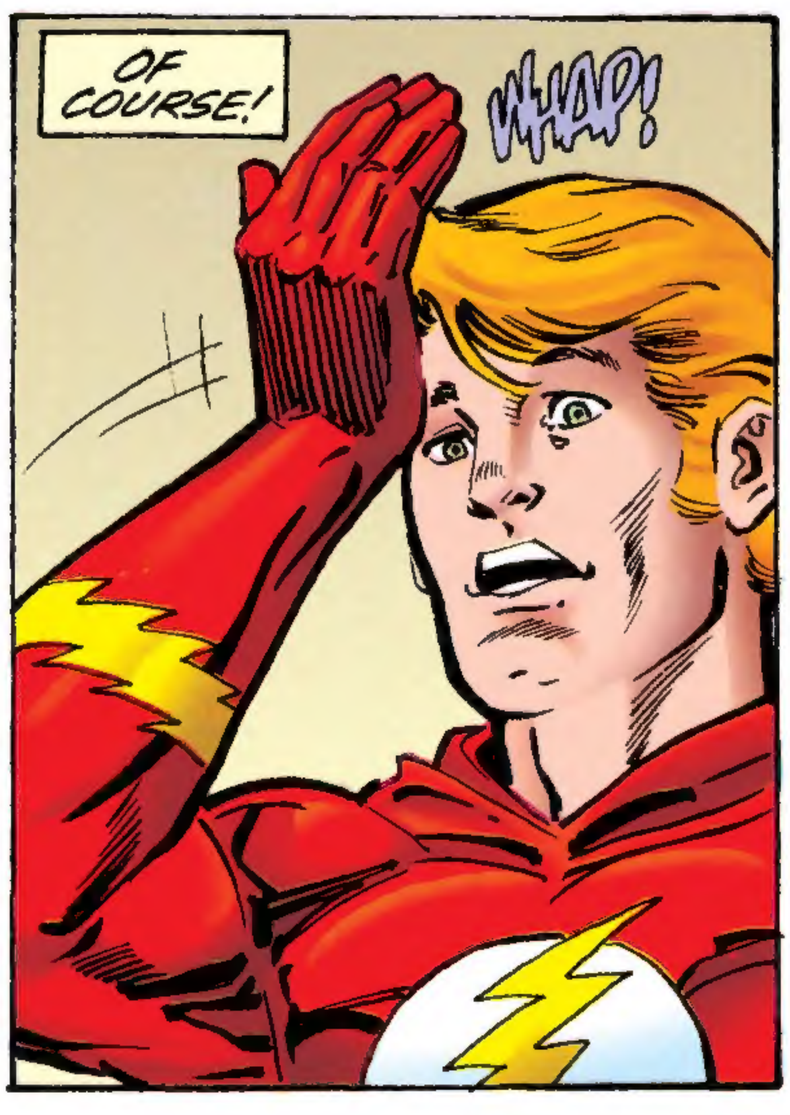
Wong FU
Factory Outlet
BUY ONE
GET ONE
FREE!!


THE SWEATERS HANG LIKE TIE-DYED BANANAS.
THEIR EMPTY YARN MOCKS ME.
FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHAT WAS IT SHE WAS TELLING ME?


I WANT A TOASTER OVEN--
NO.
-- A LAMBOR-GHINI--
NO.
-- A BIG-SCREEN TV--
NO.
-- A SEWING MACHINE--
NO!


DON'T GO HOME EMPTY-HANDED, CHAMP. HERO OR GOAT. THINK.
WHAT DID SHE SAY SHE WANTED? WHAT--




OF COURSE!
WHAP!

I...

...I DON'T KNOW... WHAT TO *SAY*...

I DON'T KNOW... THAT I HAVE ANYTHING... TO GO *WITH* IT...

OH, FOR *PETE'S SAKE*... IT'S NOT TO PUT *ON*, SILLY.

NOT THAT... IT'S NOT *LOVELY*, BUT...

...BUT IT'S SO *NOT*, I KNOW. IT'S *REPUGNANT*. *WEAR* IT, AND I'LL CLAIM I DON'T *KNOW* YOU. AND *YET*, INTERESTINGLY *ENOUGH*...NOT THE *POINT*.

I *GOT* IT TO REMIND *BOTH* OF US OF THAT *CONVERSATION* WE HAD IN *FRONT* OF IT.

YOU *REMEMBER*...?

AS IF IT WERE *YESTERDAY*. WANT TO HEAR IT *AGAIN*?

"I HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED, WALLY. GIFTS DON'T *PROVE* ANYTHING..."

...I *KNOW* YOU *LOVE* ME. WHAT I *WANT* IS FOR YOU TO *SHOW* IT... BY *LISTENING* TO ME. REALLY *LISTENING*, WITH ALL YOUR *HEART*, WHEN WE *TALK*.

BETWEEN THE *ALIEN INVASIONS* AND THE *SUPER-VILLAINS* AND WHO KNOWS *WHAT* ELSE... WELL, SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO FIGHT FOR *ATTENTION* IN YOUR WORLD.

JUST LET ME *KNOW* THAT YOU *HEAR* ME. THAT'D BE THE BEST GIFT OF *ALL*.

YOU *DID* REMEMBER!

AND WHY *WOULDN'T* I? ALIEN INVASIONS AND SUPER-VILLAINS MAY *INDEED* BE *PART* OF MY WORLD, BUT NOW AND *FOREVER*...

...YOU'RE THE *CENTER* OF IT.

LOVE YOU.

BUT GIVEN ENOUGH TIME, I LEARN MY LESSONS... AND THEN SOME.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL...

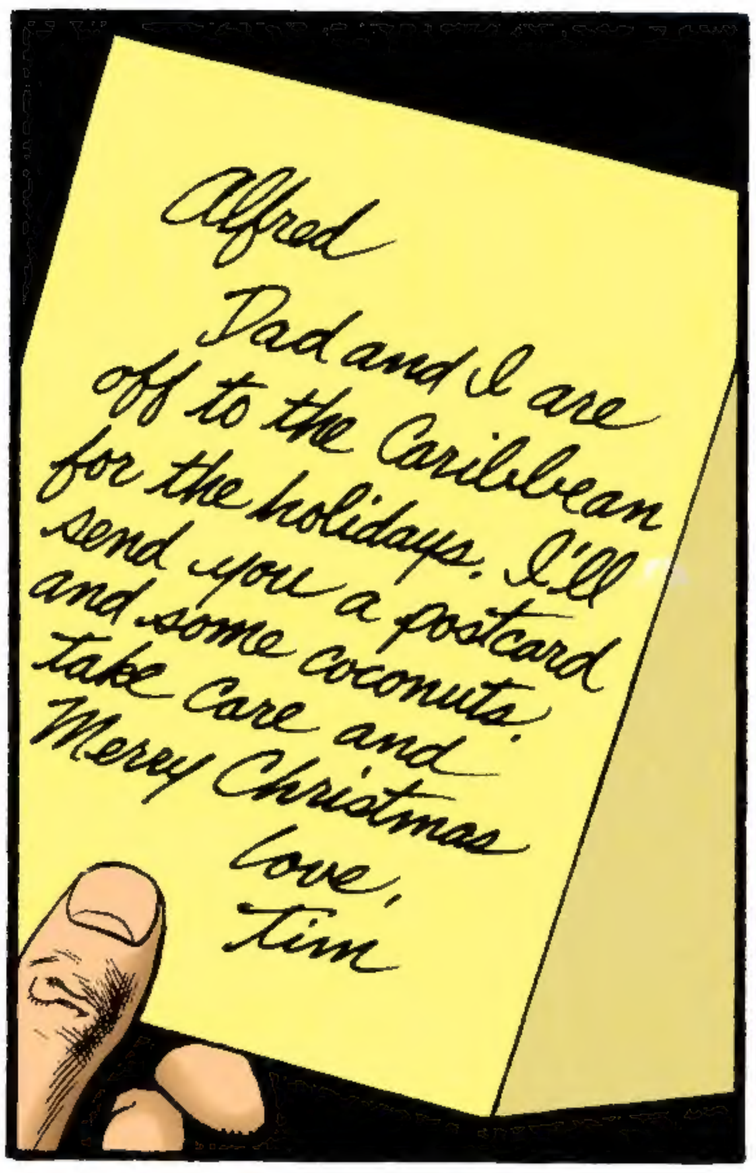
...AND TO SOME...

...A GREAT NIGHT.

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST. I MAY NOT ALWAYS BE THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE...

JUST ANOTHER NIGHT
BY
JIM APARO
WITH
KEVIN NOWLAN
INKS and COLORS
JOHN COSTANZA
LETTERS

MERRY CHRISTMAS


Alfred
Dad and I are off to the Caribbean for the holidays. I'll send you a postcard and some coconuts.
Take care and
Merry Christmas
Love,
Tim

12
1
2
3
4
5
8
9
10
11

R

Merry Christmas, Alfred.
— Bruce

END